

Editorial

The Importance of Language, Identity, and Diversity in 21st Century Canadian Post-Secondary Education

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Introduction

Canadian post-secondary institutions have recently experienced an increase in their international student populations, including students that speak neither of Canada's official languages as their first language. This population currently stands at approximately 8.4% (CBIE, 2014). The increase of multilingual students has placed a greater emphasis on issues of language, diversity, and identity at Canadian universities (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Nerad, 2010). In the field of Educational Linguistics, understanding the connections between diversity, language learning and identity has become a priority in recent decades. Punctuated by the *social turn* (Block, 2003) and the *bi/multilingual turn* (Ortega, 2013) in language education, researchers and practitioners have focused on issues of equity, identity, and cultural diversity, including a growing recognition of the fluid, dynamic nature of language use and language learner identities (Cummins, Hu, Markus & Montero, 2015; Gentil, 2005; Kubota, 2014; Norton, 2013; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009). These issues should be of interest not only to language educators but also to those responsible for supporting and facilitating the academic enculturation of multilingual students in departments and faculties across the disciplinary spectrum at Canadian post-secondary institutions (Duff, 2010; Li & Tierney, 2013).

One area where issues of language, diversity, and identity converge is in the experiences of multilingual graduate students attempting to meet the academic expectations of graduate programs at Canadian universities. Many departmental or institutional expectations include a strong emphasis on writing, including that of research articles for publication (in some cases, publication may even be a requirement for graduation). As expectations continue to rise for the publication of scholarly research by graduate students, the experiences of multilingual scholars attempting to meet expectations for academic writing in a second or additional language (L2) are of increasing interest to researchers and pedagogues. Research into this phenomenon includes investigations into the fluid and dynamic L2 writing processes and practices of multilingual authors (Matsuda & Silva, 2014), how genre-specific writing affects and is affected by authors' identities (Gentil, 2011; Hyland, 2009; Ivanič, 2006), and the efficacy of particular pedagogical approaches to providing L2 writing for publication support to multilingual graduate students (Corcoran, forthcoming; Grav & Cayley, 2015). As Canadian post-secondary institutions and graduate programs attempt to provide adequate academic support for an expanding population of multilingual graduate students, greater research in L2 writing would be particularly beneficial to those tasked with providing such support (e.g. L2 writing instructors, administrators, departmental faculty, etc.). Several main questions should drive such an agenda: How can graduate writing centres provide more culturally and linguistically responsive writing support? How can universities better facilitate more integrated delivery of such support from both content and language experts? What role might literacy brokers outside the university (e.g. peer reviewers, translators, editors) play in facilitating improved writing for publication outcomes for emerging multilingual scholars?

By providing mentored writing for publication support for a diverse population of graduate students connected to Canadian universities, the CJNSE strives to play a role as a diversity and equity focused literacy broker for (multilingual) scholars. CJNSE aims to be at the forefront of graduate student writing in Canada. This journal's commitment to publishing bilingual writing attends to issues of diversity and identity in our educational endeavors. Our policies recognize the plurilingual nature of our authors/readership and encourage submissions in multiple languages (however because our staff are volunteers our ability to accommodate different languages may vary from year to year). Further, our editorial team strives to i) connect mentors and mentees who share similar linguistic and/or cultural resources, ii) welcome author voices that express diverse, multiple, and dynamic identities, and iii)

select editorial board members and authors that represent a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Our journal's diversity-based policies and practices serve as a potential model for journal-based initiatives aimed at addressing graduate scholars' writing for publication needs. Empirical research into the efficacy of our model of intervention (see Lillis, Magyar & Robinson-Pant, 2010 for a model aimed at more experienced multilingual scholars) could be highly beneficial to those tasked with providing broad-based academic and cultural support to an increasingly diverse population of graduate students at Canadian post-secondary institutions.

In recognition of the centrality of equity and linguistic diversity in educational success, we introduce this bilingual special issue focused on language, diversity, and identity in education, with contributions addressing literacy and language teaching/learning practices and processes of elementary (Du), secondary (El Sherief), post-secondary (Godfrey-Smith; Kozak), and new Canadian (Mulcahy) populations across Canada.

Overview of special issue contributions (English)

The first article in this special issue is Dr. Xiaoxiao Du's (Western Ontario) case study investigation of biliteracy practices of Chinese-Canadian children. Du's findings point to the importance of specific factors in facilitating biliteracy among these children, including parental support. She advocates for the need to build greater awareness among parents about the potential benefits of biliteracy.

The second contribution is an autoethnographic inquiry from Lauren Godfrey-Smith (McGill), in which she reflects upon and problematizes her dynamic Canadian identity (re)construction while learning French in Montreal. She posits that her critical reflection could shed light on French language learner experiences in Montreal.

In the third contribution, Jennifer Kozak (Western Ontario) presents her unique theoretical framework for understanding the link between cross-cultural sensitivity and investment in foreign language learning. She suggests such a framework could be successfully employed by researchers attempting to better understand the intersections between identity and language learning engagement.

In the fourth contribution, Barbara Mulcahy (Memorial) relates findings from her case study investigation of a Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program in Newfoundland. Identifying such programs as central equity measures aimed at marginalized populations of immigrants and refugees, she suggests that optimum integration and learning outcomes are connected to the flexibility of instructional models and approaches.

This issue's final contribution is Hedieh El-Sherief's (OISE/University of Toronto) genre-bending review essay of Joshua Landy's book *How to Do Things with Fictions*. In her reflective review, El Sherief contends that while Landy's suggestions of introducing challenging, formative fictions is important, English literature teachers should also include more culturally-relevant fictions in their curriculum.

Acknowledgements

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